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Letters and Correspondence

Paul Turner Sargent

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Paul to Sam Feb. 10, 1936

Paul Sargent

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Paul to Sam Feb. 10, 1936

Dear Sam,

I suppose you have been reading about the old fashioned winter we have been having. The Cal. papers would give it plenty of space I suppose. We had the first cold hitch beginning Christmas that lasted a week, then a warm spell, and three weeks tomorrow the "arctic night" commenced. For three weeks there has been two or three afternoons when the snow melted some and one night of thawing when it rained. The others have been down to zero or below. Had three nights in succession 20 degrees below zero by some thermometers, not quite that by ours. Tonight it is near zero, and will be below by morning. But we are getting used to it, zero does not seem very cold now. There has been much wind this winter, from the northwest. The last storm (Sat. aft.-night) did not bring much snow, it seem that the snow goes north and south of us. Talked with a fellow just back from Fla. Said snow was 8-10 in. deep in Atlanta, Georgia. Very unusual. Said it was funny to watch those Georgians drive in it.

Part of time we had what the Germans call "slick ice." Rains one night half melted snow and froze again. Had one thawing aft. that loosened it some, but light snow on top makes it less slick. We still have a hard crusty snow that is about six snows settled down into one.

The extreme cold has caused lots of extra work, wrestling with stubborn automobile engines and getting wood. I have had considerable exercise since it came, and feel better and stronger than I have for a year or more. I had trouble getting car started so John pushed me down the hill from the barn to well but could not keep it going. Left it down there a day or so when I got Bryan to pull me with a V8 truck. Engine turned over for a while then I noticed hind wheels were sliding with chains on. Engine was locked tight. Pulled it to house and let stand a week waiting for ice to leave roads so could tow it to town. Last Friday was a thawing day so got it towed to town. In garage it started and could find nothing wrong with it mechanically that would cause the engine to lock. It is still a mystery to me and mechanic what caused it, but we have a theory. When the car was being pulled

to start it, I choked it great deal in the zero weather and suppose much liquid gasoline was pumped into cylinders. The gas cancelled the lubrication of the oil so pistons had too much friction in the zero cold (or below). When the engine started in garage I noticed much squeaking of pistons which bears out the theory. It was a new one to me. It starts very easily now. I think I could start it in 15 degrees below now. The starter generator had worn a washer so end play allowed the armature to run on other parts that cut power. I had not been farther than Salisbury for two weeks until last Fri. It bothers a lot to be unhorsed that way. I have described this engine trouble in detail because it was a new trouble to me.

They say around town water pipes have frozen at a depth of three feet in the ground, the longest and coldest spell in worst way in anybody's memory. 1917-18 a cold spell but not so much zero weather as now.

John has had his hands full, lambs coming all this time. Maybe he and Simon and others will learn that balmy mild winter weather does not always prevail in Jan. The last five or six years until this one make them think the cold winters were past, I guess. If the cold holds out till March maybe we will not have so much wind. Anyhow I prefer this to a "wind winter." Have been hauling wood up from well near orchard in the back of the car. Too slick for horses on the hill.

During worst of cold did not want to heat studio as too much of a job to keep it warm those days. So I worked in here in kitchen. On the few warm days have worked some on the Sequoia pictures. I sent two pictures to Hoosier exhibit at Marshall Fields, the 2nd largest water picture I made out there, and a mountain picture from the sketch of the blue-gray mountain I made toward the last out there. The mountain picture was accepted-it was better anyhow.

There was just one sale at Christmas time. Sold a \$75 one since, not a California picture. A banker in Casey is trying to find one he likes and I am working on a water picture for him, a \$50 size. I don't think the Western pictures are going to sell very well here—two far from the experience of the buyers.

From what I saw of the mountains last Spring and summer I like them better in the Spring, the haze does not help. So I think the cool months are better for painting there, with the cool colors and grays, and not so much sunlight. Cloud shadows over hills or mountains helps to show their form, that cannot be done in bright sunlight so well. Haven't painted many snow pictures, cannot seem to get enthused about them. If warmer days come will try some more over on the river. Do not bother about that mechanical contrivance you spoke about in your letter.

This stove has to be filled up with wood about every 10 minutes. Thermometer stands at 2 degree above zero.

Road over by Earl Cox's and $\frac{1}{4}$ south of Level corner is pretty wide filled with snow drifts from several snows. Been going around through field at Earl's.

Got a supply of paint the other day. Got it through the gallery association at Nashville with a big percentage off. I figured it 34 %. I think they get 40% from list and take about 5% to cover expense and give rest to artists belonging to the association. Got 40 tubes (10 lbs. white) for \$11.71, largest gob of paint I have had on board in years. Also in the big companies its are going to compete with P. Pigments I don't know, but they surely will have to reduce soon.

Just now took a pot of coals to the cellar. That makes more than 25 of them this cold spell. Wind does not blow tonight as it was last two nights. Would seem that tomorrow should be warmer, with another snow storm on hand maybe.

So Mr. Ervin (or Erwin) thinks he will paint. A great many have thought that before trying. It is alright to try, he may find a good hobby, any how he will have a certain byproduct a higher appreciation of pictures. Tell him I am making one of the mountains by the Salton Sea for him. I will commence soon with some painting lessons with a teacher of geology here in T.C. And am getting frames and pictures ready for an exhibit at T., later at Mattoon.

Ray Allison, I think you know. I believe he said he knew you. He, at about Christmas was told by doctor to stay in bed a month. He is still there, tuberculosis I guess. He must be worse as his wife said he wasn't seeing any visitors.

Tom M. was down Sunday and bought a small picture for a business man who had been good to him.

Doesn't seem there is much else to mention.

Am thinking I will move the old house that stands west of the road over here in Spring, and use it for a garage in winter. Have a stove in it so can thaw out a car and get it started. It is a wonder the old house has survived this long over there subject to the carelessness and cussedness of people passing. Think I will make it extra warm by putting sawdust in walls and a double floor. Pearl thinks I can get old lumber from Palmer from the old Cox house he tore down. It would not take much extra except the floor. Don't know where to put it. Somewhere to west of house. Thought just north of road west of walnut tree that stood by old loom house. Or maybe in brush of old grape arbor south west of house. But to be warmer garage door should face south. I have got my fill this year of wrestling with a cold automobile. Forget that it may had medium oil in engine when it got locked, now have No. 10 and a great difference in cranking. Also have a new Delco battery in it now. Don't think it will be any more trouble.

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More than one, since with his glasses was ???? without. If there is a streak of light reflected in one lens of glasses it will not hurt if does not cover eye too much but don't let reflected light show in both if can help it. I don't remember if this is the pose of head as started it with painting but it will show how I want the light on him. Go by the pose in the painting. Have Coral send the painting to me. Take it off stretcher and send rolled in a tube or around one. Do not send stretchers. Eyes in photograph should not look quite straight ahead follow painting if it shows it.

Guess this is all.

Want the photograph about as large as you can make it with your camera. I will have an enlargement made to about life size, or a little smaller.